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GLOBAL FUND RELEASE ASSISTANCE OPERATIONS PROCEDURE GUIDE

APPLICABILITY

All adult secure facilities Department-owned and contracted, as specified in the contract.

GLOBAL FUND OPERATIONS PROCEDURE GUIDE
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I. Introduction to Inmate Welfare Account's Global Fund

A. Inmate Welfare Account

The Department of Corrections (Department) will establish, maintain, and manage inmate welfare accounts to enhance programs and services that directly affect inmates in secure facilities; funds may be allocated as release assistance to appropriate inmates. Accounts and revenues will be managed in compliance with generally accepted accounting principles and a system of checks and balances.

The following monies will be deposited in the IWF:

- a. donations by individuals, organizations, or community groups, excluding inmate donations and donations from inmate families;
- b. public money held for the needs of inmates that has not been allocated elsewhere; and
- c. revenues generated from the following:
 - 1) inmate collect calls and calling card sales;
 - 2) food sales and cash proceeds from the sale of appropriate confiscated contraband pursuant to [53-1-105, MCA](#); and
 - 3) the sale of canteen items at Department and contracted facilities.

B. Inmate Welfare Account's Global Fund

The Global Fund is comprised of pooled annual contributions of inmate welfare accounts from each secure facility based on inmate population and funds available; funds will be used to provide release assistance to eligible inmates upon discharge, parole, or furlough and may be used as financial assistance to facilities for implementation of projects that benefit inmates directly.

Inmates may review Global Fund contributions through the annual budget process and inmate representatives may be provided monthly financial reports.

C. Release Assistance at a Glance

After extended periods of incarceration many inmates reaching the end of their confinement struggle to afford housing upon release, continue to pay for needed medication, or to cover the costs of treatment programs required as a condition of parole by the Board of Pardons and Parole (BOPP). As a result of these financial difficulties large proportions of inmates released from incarceration return to confinement within three years. In an effort to mitigate these restraints, and achieve the mission of the Department, the Department administers release assistance funds to eligible inmates from the IWF.

Inmates that meet the criteria below are eligible to receive release assistance up to \$500 out of the Global Fund of the Inmate Welfare Account. Release assistance will only be paid from the Department and directly to the approved vender. The vendor must fill out a W-9 tax form

and/or have a proper and appropriate Tax Identification Number (TIN). Release assistance funds may be used for:

- a. rent or housing costs;
- b. continuation of medication and/or medical supplies; and
- c. treatment and/or programming.

II. Global Fund Release Assistance Process

A. Responsibility of the Case Manager

The case manager will receive the request for release assistance from the Global Fund by the inmate at least 45 days in advance of the inmate's discharge or release; exceptions may be granted for short notice releases granted by the BOPP, to include parole, furloughs, and ISP.

The case manager will initiate the preliminary screen for inmate eligibility for release assistance, [Application for Release Assistance](#) form. The screen for eligibility includes the following seven (7) mandatory screening criteria.

1. Has the inmate remained incarcerated at a secure facility for at least 12 months prior to the issuance of release assistance?

If the inmate has not been incarcerated at MSP, MWP, Crossroads Correctional Center, Dawson County Regional Prison, or Cascade County Regional Prison for 12 continuous and consecutive months they are not eligible for release assistance. Incarceration may have been spent at another State's facility, but the inmate must be at the facility under a DOC, MSP, or MWP commitment. This is to ensure release assistance funds are used by inmates who have contributed to the fund.

2. Did the inmate previously receive release assistance within the past five (5) years?

If the inmate received release assistance at any time within the previous five years of the date the current release assistance would be allocated the inmate is not eligible to receive release assistance.

3. Has the inmate completed or in the process of completing all programming required by the DOC, the sentencing court, or the BOPP?

If the inmate is on the waiting list, but not currently enrolled in programming, this will qualify as compliant and will not deter eligibility for release assistance.

4. Does the inmate have any major conduct violations within the previous six (6) months of the issue date for release assistance?

A major rule infraction within the preceding six months of receiving release assistance will disqualify an inmate from eligibility.

The case manager or IPPO may consider the nature of the infraction and the disciplinary history of the inmate to grant objections to this requirement.

The inmate may request a review of the case manager decision to the facility administrator, or designee, by checking the box provided on the [Application for Release Assistance](#).

The administrator, or designee, will respond to the review request normally within 10 business days. The decision is final and exhausts the review process.

5. Does the inmate have, or has the inmate had a job assignment for a majority of their incarceration?

Inmates are required to work and contribute to receive release assistance. Inmates may be exempt from this requirement due to an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation, or for other approved reasons on a case-by-case basis.

The inmate may request a review of the case manager decision to the facility administrator, or designee, by checking the box provided on the [Application for Release Assistance](#).

The administrator, or designee, will respond to the review request normally within 10 business days. The decision is final and exhausts the review process.

6. Does the inmate have a GED, in the process of completing a GED, enrolled and waiting for a GED program, or has a high school diploma?

Inmates are required to be at least enrolled and waiting to receive a GED unless previously ruled exempt by the facility administrator, or designee, to qualify for release assistance.

If not exempt and the inmate does not qualify under the requirement the inmate may attempt to become exempt by petitioning the facility administrator, or designee; this is not reviewable through the inmate release assistance application process.

7. Has the inmate transferred \$500 or more out of the inmate's account within the 12 previous months of the release assistance date?

This is to exclude funds used to purchase items at the facility including, but not limited to, canteen, phone cards, and hobby items.

This money excludes funds used to cover restitution and court ordered fines and fees.

Inmate accounts may be required to review the inmate account during the initial investigation to determine inmate eligibility for release assistance.

The IPPO may complete this process in place of the case manager when appropriate or needed.

If the initial screen for inmate release assistance is approved the case manager will begin working with the inmate and the inmate's parole plan to identify amount(s) needed and the vendor(s) that will receive release assistance.

The case manager will then forward the release assistance application to the IPPO for continuation in the process.

B. Responsibility of Institutional Probation and Parole Officer (IPPO)

The IPPO will work with the eligible inmate to identify vendors to receive the release assistance if the case manager did not complete this process.

It is the responsibility of the IPPO to approve all identified vendors.

If release assistance is for housing, the IPPO will contact local probation and parole officers located in the area and region of the proposed housing location; local officers will check the residence and determine if it is suitable for habitation by the inmate upon release. If the location is not approved the IPPO and the inmate will determine a different suitable location and the probation and parole officer will again investigate the location in order to determine the locations appropriateness for habitation and rehabilitation.

If release assistance is used to continue medication or medical supplies, the IPPO will work with medical staff to determine medication needs, vendors, and cost.

The IPPO will use the parole plan and the release conditions by the BOPP to determine appropriate treatment and program vendors if release assistance is used for treatment or programing as directed by the BOPP; or when the inmate desires to pursue treatment services independently.

After the vendor(s) have been identified and approved the IPPO will forward the application for inmate release assistance to the applicable budget analyst usually within 10 days of the release date. The IPPO will route copies of the form to all applicable divisions noted at the bottom of the Application for Release Assistance form.

C. Responsibility of the Budget Analyst

The budget analyst will forward all necessary paper work to the accounting bureau so a warrant(s) may be issued and sent to the approved vendor(s).

The budget analyst will record all approved request and reconcile monthly with the State Accounting Budget Human Resource System (SABHRS). The budget analyst will provide each facility a copy of the SABHRS release assistance report monthly.

The budget analyst will record each use of funds and report the usage of funds at each PIB meeting along with all other necessary documents to facility administrators. The budget analyst will also provide facility administrators IWF fiscal data for use in the annual budget process.

D. Responsibility of the Accounting Bureau

A representative of the accounting bureau may be requested to review inmate account history to verify if the inmate initially qualifies for release assistance.

After the accounting bureau receives the release assistance paper work from the budget analyst, they will begin the process of issuing the warrant(s)

The accounting bureau will send the warrant(s) directly to the approved vendor(s) and notify the case manager, IPPO, and budget analyst when the warrant(s) are mailed out.

III. Duties of the Facility Administrator, or Designee

A. Review Process

The facility administrator, or designee, will have final authority to approve inmate release assistance in situations that the inmate requests a review of the case manager or IPPO's decision to deny release assistance because of misconduct violations or inmate work inadequacies.

The facility administrator, or designee, may not review a denial of release assistance because the length of incarceration was less than 12 consecutive months, payment of release assistance was provided within the previous five (5) years, or because an inmate transferred more than \$500 out of the inmate account for unapproved allocations during the previous 12-month period.

IV. References

17-7-502, MCA; [53-1-105, MCA](#); 53-1-109, MCA; 53-1-203, MCA; 53-30-101, MCA
[DOC 1.2.12 Inmate Welfare Account](#)

V. Definitions

Administrator – The official, regardless of local title (division or facility administrator, bureau chief, warden, superintendent), ultimately responsible for the division, facility or program operation and management.

Adult Secure Facilities – Department and contract facilities to include Montana State Prison, Montana Women's Prison, Crossroads Correctional Facility, Dawson County Correctional Facility, and Cascade County Correctional Facility.

Canteen Revenues – Net profits generated from the sale of canteen items at Department and contracted facilities.

Contraband – Any item possessed by an offender or found within the facility that is illegal by law, prohibited by policy or procedure, or unauthorized by those legally charged with the administration and operation of the facility.

Facility Fund – Funds within an inmate welfare account, reviewed by inmates and utilized for the needs of inmates and inmate's families within a Department-owned or contracted facility.

Global Funds – Pooled annual contributions of inmate welfare accounts from each secure facility based on inmate population and funds available; funds will be used to provide release assistance to eligible inmates upon discharge, parole, or furlough and may be used as financial assistance to facilities for implementation of projects that benefit inmates directly and are reviewed by inmate representatives.

Miscellaneous Revenues - Revenue generated from food sales and cash proceeds from the sale of confiscated contraband.

Inmate Representatives – Inmates approved by the facility administrator to represent the offender population.

Prison Issues Board – Administrators and staff from Department and contracted facilities and prisons who meet to discuss and coordinate the policy and operational functions of the facilities.

Telephone Revenues - Proceeds generated from offender collect calls and calling card sales.

VI. Attachments

- A. [Application for Release Assistance](#)
- B. [IWF Budget Estimate Worksheet](#)
- C. [IWF Release Assistance Worksheet](#)